

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

#35
a SD11
45936

I

THE FIRST FORESTRY SCHOOL IN AMERICA



Received by
Indexing Branch



U.S. Forest Service
Pisgah National Forest
North Carolina



THE FIRST FORESTRY SCHOOL

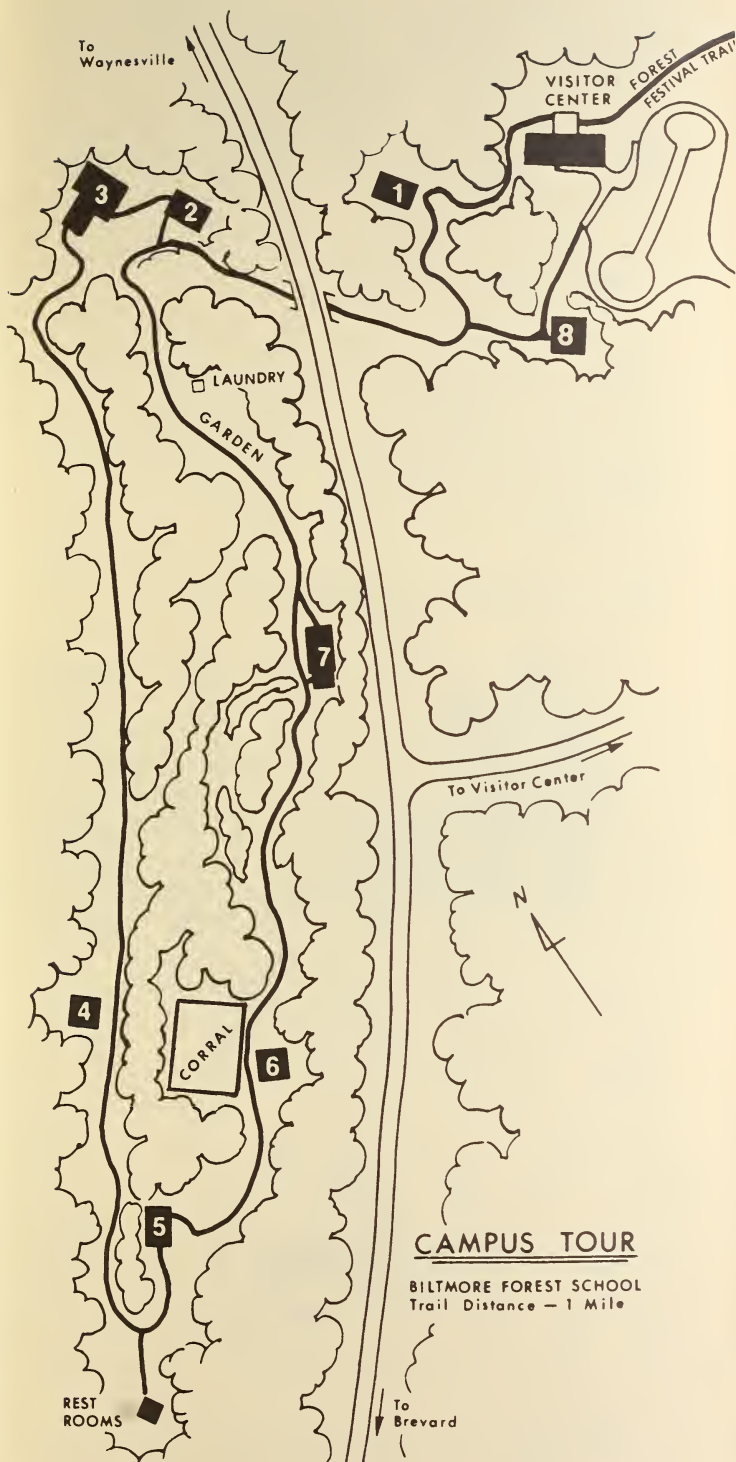
America's first forestry school began in George Vanderbilt's "Pisgah Forest" in the mountains of western North Carolina in 1898. Dr. Carl A. Schenck, Biltmore Estate Forester, founded the school in order to satisfy his questioning apprentices.

Winter classes were held at Biltmore Estate near Asheville and summer sessions in Pisgah Forest. The School operated on a 12 month basis and a young man could start at the beginning of any of the various lectures. Schenck had a favorite greeting for new students - - "Join us and sink or swim".

He also said that no student could hope to be successful at Biltmore unless he was willing to devote all of his time and all of his energy to study - - in the classroom, in the field, and in his room.

The "Campus" at Biltmore Forest School consisted of mountaineer cabins and farm homes which once had been part of the old "Pink Beds" community. The one room community school and church became the forestry school's classroom.

Schenck left Vanderbilt in 1909 and took his school with him. Students traveled and studied in such places as Sun Burst, North Carolina, Cadillac, Michigan and Germany. The Biltmore Forest School graduated its last class in 1913.



CAMPUS TOUR

BILTMORE FOREST SCHOOL
Trail Distance - 1 Mile



1. SCHOOL HOUSE

The people of the Pink Beds community built their church. Occasionally Schenck preached at the church and even bought an organ to "improve the singing". He said, "singing is the best peacemaker". Schenck brought his "boys", as he called his students, here each spring for about six months. He lectured mornings and after lunch led the students to the field to demonstrate practical applications of his theories.

Alumni of the Biltmore Forest School donated funds to have the school building reconstructed in 1966.

2. COMMISSARY

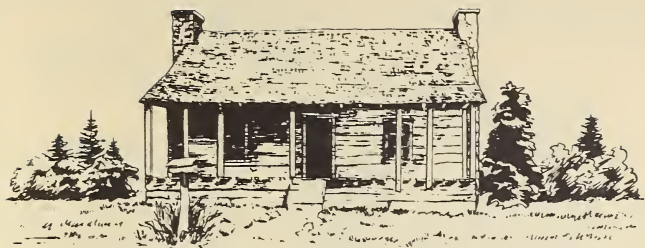


Vanderbilt had a Commissary built here in 1902 for his workers and those still living in the Pink Beds area. It also was used as a community center.

The forestry students bought supplies here and ate a quick lunch of hoop cheese, crackers, potted meat, or corned beef and a can of peaches before going into the field.



Interior of Commissary



3. RANGER'S DWELLING

Several students boarded here with Schenck's Rangers - - first Jimmy Case and later Ranger Gillespie. The food was plain, some students called Mrs. Gillespie a "stomach robber", who "couldn't heat water, let alone cook".

Vanderbilt purchased this house, including the farm, from Hiram King. King was the community leader and had the finest house in the area.

The Forest Service has rehabilitated the original building which still stands.



The kitchen in the Ranger's Dwelling where Mrs. Gillespie served meals to Schenck's students.

4. SCHENCK'S OFFICE



Schenck's summer office was built from an abandoned barn, using only half of the barn.

His secretary used the front room.

One desk was for typing the other for running off exams and handout information on a letter press. The back room was Schenck's. Here, he graded exams, answered correspondence and prepared lessons. Surveying instruments and field equipment were stored in the loft overhead.

5. BLACK FOREST LODGE



Schenck built several lodges for his Rangers, imitating the architecture used in the Black Forest of Germany. They were located at strategic

points throughout Pisgah Forest where his Rangers could watch for game violators and unauthorized timber cutting. They would also be handy to fight forest fires.

Some Rangers had special assignments such as operating a trout hatchery and pheasant breeding. A Ranger's salary was \$50 per month, an assistant Ranger's \$25 per month.



Interior of Black Forest Lodge.



6. BLACKSMITH SHOP

The Blacksmith traveled from the town of Pisgah Forest with his equipment, making emergency repairs along the way. In his modest shop, he sharpened tools for the woods workers. Horseshoeing and wagon repairs were done at the blacksmith shop in Pisgah Forest.

7. STUDENT QUARTERS "HELL HOLE"



Students were told to "find" yourselves a place to stay". And they did, in abandoned mountaineer cabins, farm homes, or with one of the Rangers.

The students named the five cabins which they inhabited; "Hell Hole", "Little Hell Hole", "The Palace", "Little Bohemia", and "Rest for the Wicked".

Little Hell Hole was on the other side of Hell Hole where U. S. Highway 276 is today.

Inside the building you will see rattlesnake skins, "winning" poker hands, and pin-up pictures mounted on the walls.

Many of the over 300 graduates of Biltmore Forest School became successful in forestry and other fields.

8. DRAW ROAD

Before Vanderbilt bought this land, the Pink Beds was a small mountain community. They raised cattle, hogs, geese and turkeys and they needed a market for their flocks and herds. They "drove" or herded their animals to Greenville, S.C. which was the closest large market, although some walked as far as Charleston.

9. THE WASH PLACE

Here the clothes were boiled over an open fire and washed with lye soap. Then the clothes were rinsed in Looking Glass Creek and hung to dry. Mrs. Case and Mrs. Gillespie would have used this site with the King House just beyond the rhododendron thicket.

10. CANTRELL CREEK LODGE



This is another Black Forest Lodge built under Schenck's direction to house his Rangers who protected Vanderbilt's forest.

Pisgah National Forest
1001 Pisgah Highway
Pisgah, NC 28768



Persons of any race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or with any disability are welcome to use and enjoy all facilities, programs and services of the USDA. Discrimination in any form is strictly against agency policy, and should be reported to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.